



## Actinic Keratosis



### Overview

This rough, discolored growth forms on the outer layer of skin. We often see it on skin that gets a lot of sun. It's more common in people who have fair skin, red or blonde hair and light-colored eyes. And most often, we see it in people older than 40.

### Causes

Why does actinic keratosis form? It's caused by years of exposure to UV light. That's a type of light you get from the sun and from tanning beds. Over time, this light damages your skin.

### Symptoms

To spot actinic keratosis, look for a small patch of skin that may feel dry, rough or scaly. It may be raised, and it may be a different color from the skin around it. The patch may itch or burn. It may bleed, and a crust may form on it. There may be more than one of these patches on your skin.

### Treatment

How do we treat it? Usually, your doctor will recommend removal. That's because an actinic keratosis can turn into cancer. So don't ignore it. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you. And remember to use sunscreen and limit your exposure to UV light to lower your risk for these growths.